

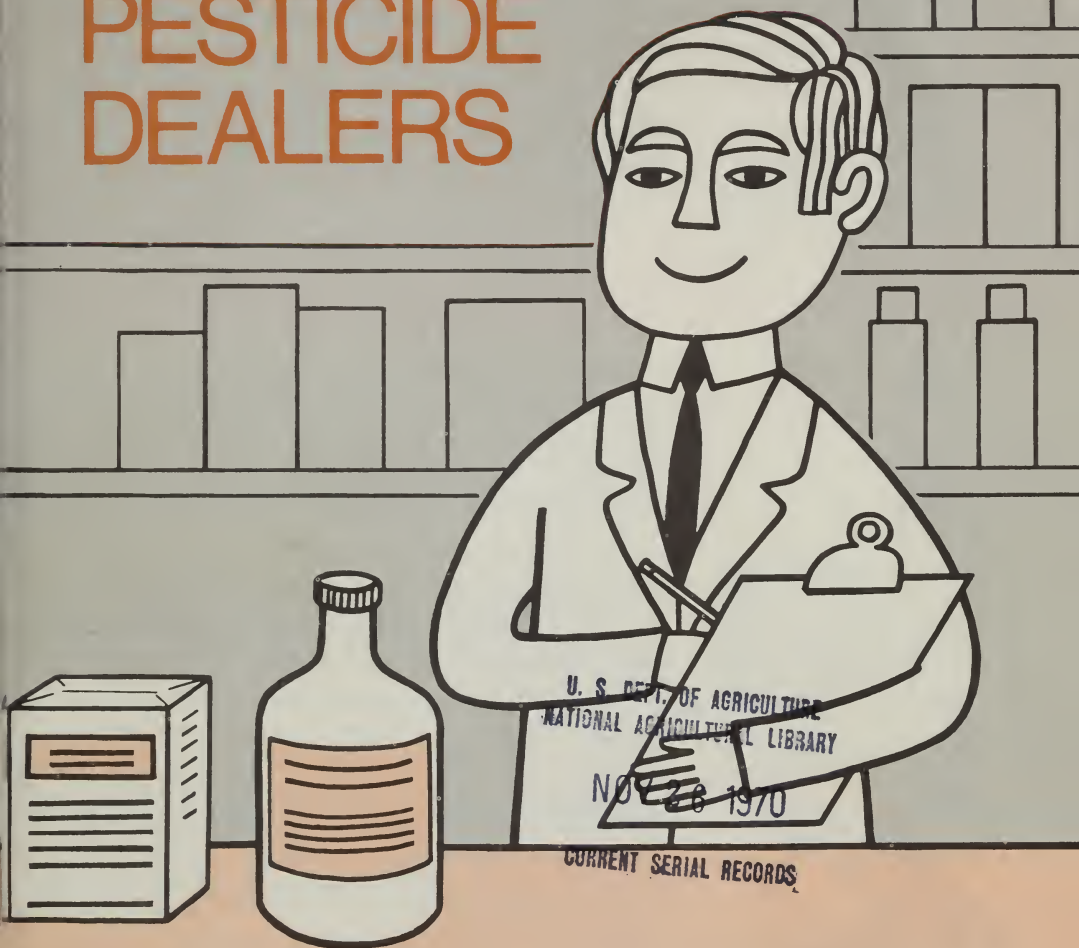
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# SAFETY GUIDE FOR PESTICIDE DEALERS



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NOV 28 1970

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

As a dealer in pesticides, you are in a unique position to help prevent accidents that might injure your customers and employees. You are usually the final contact with the public before they use pesticides.

The best source of information on the safe handling and use of pesticides is the label on the product container. Read the label and encourage your customers and employees to read the label. Pesticide labels must be registered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture before products can be sold across State lines. Before being granted a USDA registration number, products must meet strict requirements for safety and effectiveness when used as directed. The registration number is placed on the label.



All pesticides are poisonous to some degree and must be handled carefully. Pesticides bearing skull and crossbones symbols are highly toxic and should be handled with special care. Products with a high percentage of active ingredients are called "concentrates." Because concentrates present more hazards than diluted materials, large packages of concentrates are generally intended for use by farmers and commercial users who are knowledgeable about pesticides. Such large packages are not normally used by the average homeowner.

Careless or improper handling, storage, display, disposal, or selling of pesticides can result in the accidental poisoning of a customer or employee. You may be held liable for damages or injury if you failed to take safety precautions in dealing with pesticides. Whether or not such charges are upheld in court, they may result in publicity that will damage your business reputation and customer good will.

In addition to reading pesticide labels, observing the guidelines and other information in this publication will help you to handle and sell pesticides safely.

When shipments of pesticides arrive, check the vehicle and all pesticide containers before and after unloading. If a spill or leak is detected, notify the carrier and determine if other articles in the vehicle were contaminated. Make sure that all labels are fully legible and are firmly attached to containers. Vehicles used to transport pesticides should be thoroughly cleaned before reuse.

If spillage or leakage involves a highly toxic pesticide that can be absorbed through breathing or directly through unbroken skin, the area should be cleared and local public health officials notified. If highly toxic chemicals are involved, manufacturers may supply trained decontamination teams.

Do not toss or drop containers. Do not slide them over rough surfaces or protruding nails that might rip bags or puncture rigid containers. If a forklift or other mechanical equipment is used, make sure it does not puncture or tear containers. Use of pallets is advisable.

Don't smoke or put your hands to your face when handling pesticides—even if containers are intact and tightly sealed. Wash your face and hands with soap and water immediately after handling pesticides.

Store all pesticides in isolated areas away from articles intended for human and animal consumption and use (such as food, drugs, cosmetics, clothing, feeds, tobacco, or pet food); and away from living plants and animals. Herbicides should be kept apart from other pesticides to avoid cross-contamination and substitution errors.

Before storing any pesticide, read the label to see if any special precautions should be taken. Generally, pesticides should be stored in well-ventilated areas away from fire or heat sources such as furnaces and steam lines. Select a cool, dry place where bags and boxes will not rot and spill their contents. Most liquids must be stored at temperatures above freezing. Avoid stacking pesticide packages too high since combined weight could break the packages on the bottom.

## RECEIVING SHIPMENTS



## HANDLING PESTICIDES

## STORING PESTICIDES





## DISPLAYING PESTICIDES

As pesticides are placed on display shelves, examine all containers. Be sure that containers do not leak, that all caps are tight, and that all packages are sealed. Labels should be in place and legible. Make sure that the outside surfaces of containers are not coated with pesticide.

## SERVING YOUR CUSTOMERS



Tell your customers to read the label before purchasing pesticides. Labels list the pests each product controls and the crops, animals, or sites on which it can be safely applied.

Pesticides should be displayed in one area of your store on shelves separated from other products. This is important because containers for food and other items intended for human and animal use do not ordinarily provide protection from contamination by leakage or dust escaping from pesticide products. Above all, keep pesticides on shelves beyond the reach of children.



Selling bigger packages may mean bigger profits—but it may also mean increased hazards when dealing with pesticides. Sell the size package that customers need for their immediate use. Then they will not be faced with the problem of storing or disposing leftover pesticides.

Leaky pesticide containers can contaminate food and other items as quickly in a shopping bag as on your shelves. To fully protect your customers, check-out personnel should tighten lids and look for leakage before placing pesticides in a separate bag—away from all other items purchased.

## DISPOSING OF PESTICIDES AND CONTAINERS

One of the most common causes of pesticide accidents is the carelessly handled "empty" container. No pesticide container is ever completely empty. Active material—wet or dry—clings to the inner surfaces of all containers. "Empties," therefore, should never be reused for any purpose. All empty or broken pesticide containers should be kept in locked storage until time for disposal. If the labels are lost or obliterated, "empties" should be marked to clearly indicate previous contents. This will warn anyone who might later find and want to reuse them.

The best way to dispose of small, empty pesticide containers is to wrap them in several layers of newspapers and put them in the trash can. If trash collection service is not available, dispose of containers at a sanitary land-fill dump or bury them in a level, isolated place where they will not contaminate water supplies.

Do not burn paper bags, and cardboard or metal pesticide containers. Pesticide vapors and particles generated by burning containers can endanger people, animals, livestock, and plants. Local ordinances may prohibit burning pesticides and pesticide containers.

There is no easy way to dispose of unwanted pesticides. Ask your pesticides distributor to take the unsaleable chemicals left from breakage or leaky containers. He may arrange for disposal with factory wastes. If the distributor will not take them off your hands, check with city and county officials. Find out if there is a dump or other place nearby that is equipped for disposal of hazardous chemicals. When no other method is available, unwanted pesticides should be buried in an isolated, level area where seepage downward to the water table will not occur. Under no circumstances should pesticides be poured down a drain or sewer.

## SOLVING SPECIAL PROBLEMS

Ask your distributor about shelf life of the containers in which his pesticides are packaged. Over long periods of time, some chemicals eat away the insides of containers, leaving the metal brittle or dangerously thin. You are the only one who can estimate whether products held in your inventory for a long time can be sold safely, returned to the supplier, or should be destroyed. Shipping defective containers may endanger employees and may risk contamination of food or other products intended for human or animal use.

Do not sell repackaged pesticides. This is illegal and unsafe. Pesticide labels contain precautions and instructions needed by users, plus ingredient and antidote statements necessary in case of accident. For these and other reasons, product labels should always remain with the pesticide—and with the "empty" container.



## TAKING CARE OF ACCIDENTS

If you spill a pesticide on your skin, wash immediately. If your clothing becomes soaked or contaminated, change at once, take a shower, and launder the clothing before wearing it again. Discard shoes that cannot be thoroughly decontaminated. Note label warning and consult a doctor if indicated.

Whenever a pesticide container is broken or leakage occurs, read the label immediately to determine if the pesticide is dangerous to yourself, your customers, or employees. If the pesticide is highly toxic, the label may have decontamination instructions to help you dispose of the pesticide safely. Manufacturers should be contacted for instructions when extremely toxic chemicals are involved, since decontamination may require replacing floorboards and other unusual precautions.

Most labels do not have instructions for cleaning up spilled pesticides. Wet chemicals should be absorbed as much as possible in sweeping compound, sawdust, or similar absorbent material. The remainder of the wet chemical should be mopped up with water and a detergent. Afterwards, the pail should be washed and scrubbed with a detergent and set aside for pesticide cleanup use only. Never pour spilled pesticide or mop water down the drain; contaminated liquids—and the mop head—should be placed in a container or drum marked “Pesticides, Do Not Use.” Dispose of containers and contents in the manner outlined in the section on pesticide disposal. Dry pesticides should be swept up carefully and disposed of in the same way.

If you feel ill while working with pesticides or afterwards, call or send someone for a doctor. Consult the product container for first aid instructions. The doctor may want to know the product's ingredients and the antidote listed on the label.

**Help reduce pesticide accidents and misuses. Remind your customers to read the label and follow instructions and precautions.**



# KNOW YOUR PESTICIDES

Pesticides are sold in many forms—dry powders ready to apply; wettable powders to be diluted; ready-to-apply solutions; “bug bombs”; and liquid concentrates for dilution. Pesticides come in a variety of containers, including bags, cartons, cans, bottles, jugs, tubes, and drums.

Depending on their use, pesticides fall into five principal classes: **insecticides**, for killing insects; **fungicides**, for controlling plant diseases; **herbicides**, for destroying weeds; **germicides**, for killing germs; and **rodenticides**, for killing vertebrate pests.



*Use Pesticides Safely*  
FOLLOW THE LABEL

**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE**

**Pesticides Regulation Division**